

II. Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject patent application are requested.

Claims 1 and 6-9 are pending in the application. Claims 2-5 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 10-12 have been withdrawn from further consideration. Claim 1 is independent. Claims 1, 6, 7, and 9 have been amended herein. No new matter has been added.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication at page 4 of the Office Action that claims 5-9 are directed to allowable subject matter.

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,945,965 to Inoguchi, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,483,567 to Okada. Applicants traverse this claim rejection. However, while preserving the right to pursue these claims in a continuation application and solely to advance prosecution, Claims 2-5 have been cancelled without prejudice, and independent Claim 1 has been rewritten to incorporate all of the limitations of allowable Claim 5. Further, each of Claims 6, 7, and 9 has been amended to depend from amended Claim 1 instead of now-cancelled Claim 5. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 1 and 6-9 are now allowable over the cited references.

In view of the claim amendments and the above remarks, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 625-3633. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James A. Gromada".

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